

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 435

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Walter Willis Williams, a World War II veteran, for his dutiful and valiant military service.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to honor those many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of individuals continue this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, Walter Willis Williams is one such esteemed citizen who served with courage and gallantry during World War II and deserves proper recognition for his distinguished performance of duty to this nation; and

WHEREAS, an accomplished member of the United States Navy, Walter Williams served aboard carrier, USS Essex, from November of 1942 to December of 1945; during her commission, the USS Essex, a brand new aircraft carrier at the time, was involved in numerous activities; and

WHEREAS, reporting to the engineering department's "B" division, Mr. Williams worked on the distillers that provided the fresh water for the boilers that built steam, which powered the huge ship; one of his main tasks was to man the headphones as part of the interior communications system; and

WHEREAS, during Mr. Williams's tenure on the ship, it was involved in several major battles, including Wake Island, Okinawa, and the Philippine Sea; the ship, with 500 officers and 3,000 men, was responsible for shooting down an astounding 1,531 Japanese aircraft; and

WHEREAS, renowned as "the fightingest ship in the Navy", the USS Essex won the Presidential Unit Citation, along with many other awards and honors; and

WHEREAS, Walter Williams's outstanding work ethic contributed to the successful commission of the USS Essex and he was soon promoted to Boiler Tender Second Class; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams received numerous awards and decorations for his noble service, including the Presidential Unit Citation with Ribbon Bar, which was awarded to everyone on the USS Essex, the Good Conduct Medal, Meritorious Conduct, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal with Asia Clasp, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, and the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation Badge, an award of the Philippine/Korean government; and

WHEREAS, upon an honorable discharge from the Navy, Mr. Williams joined the Merchant Marine from 1946 to 1948, where he served in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea; and

WHEREAS, a native of Bayard, West Virginia, Walter Williams moved to Jonesborough in 1966; and

WHEREAS, in addition to serving his country, he has contributed his time and talents to his beloved Jonesborough community, including serving on the Advisory Board for the Jonesborough Area Senior Center and securing initial funding, supplies, and services for the center; and

WHEREAS, he founded the SHARE Program, has served as a board member of the Buffalo Mountain Methodist Camp Advisory Board, receiving special recognition for his volunteer work with the camp, and was instrumental in starting the wheelchair refurbishing and distribution program which is now being overseen by the Kiwanis Club; and

WHEREAS, an active volunteer for the Good Samaritan Ministries for many years, Mr. Williams assisted with organizing monthly meals for the Melting Pot, as well as collecting and organizing the yearly Christmas parties for needy families, receiving both A Good Samaritan Certificate on November 24, 1988, and a Certificate of Appreciation for Helping Hands of Service presented by Sarah C. Wells on May 2, 2005; and

WHEREAS, Walter Williams is a lifetime member of VFW #2109, a member of Color Honor Guard for VFW #2108, and a member and past vice commander of the American Legion Post in Pikesville, Maryland; he received the 2004 Certificate of Appreciation Patriots Corps from the VFW on June 22, 2004, for his ongoing dedication to veterans, American Troops, and their families; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams has also received other numerous awards and recognitions for his outstanding contributions to his community, including a Certificate of Appreciation from the Jonesborough Area Adult Center, a Certificate of Honors for Outstanding Dedicated Service to the Town of Jonesborough, the J.C. Penny Golden Rule Award for exceptional volunteer service, and the Outstanding Achievement Award for Outstanding Community Service on April 23, 1992, from McDonald's; and

WHEREAS, on April 24, 1988, Walter Williams received a Certificate of Recognition for his status as an Active Older Person at the Governor's Conference on Aging; one of only nine persons in the State to be recognized with this honor, Mr. Williams was cited for the First Tennessee District, which encompasses all of East Tennessee, and

WHEREAS, Walter Williams's leadership, dedication, achievement, and service to our Nation have distinguished him as an altruistic soldier of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams has performed his duties with the utmost skill and professionalism; his service can only be categorized as outstanding; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Walter Willis Williams for his dutiful and valiant military service during World War II, recognize his extensive contributions and astute service to the good people of Jonesborough, and salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.